**Washington, DC** –Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) today met with Minnesota State Senator Katie Sieben, a commissioner to the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC). The organization advocates for the development of a passenger rail system in the region. McCollum reiterated her support for the federally designated corridor from Chicago to St. Paul and commended the MIPRC's efforts under the leadership of Sen. Sieben and Minnesota State Representative Linda Slocum, Vice-Chair of MIPRC.

"Linking St. Paul to Chicago, via Winona, with high speed rail is one of my top priorities. This connection will be critical to our state's future economic vitality. My meeting today with Senator Sieben highlighted the need for Minnesota to stand united behind the investment in this rail line and this route. Senator Sieben's valuable leadership is essential to making this project a reality," said Congresswoman McCollum.

McCollum and the MIPRC commissioners discussed upcoming legislative actions that can benefit the Midwest High Speed Rail. This year Congress will reauthorize the federal transportation bill and the incoming Obama administration has already articulated a strong commitment to invest in transportation infrastructure, including passenger rail.

"I am committed to working in Congress to secure funding for the federally designated high speed rail corridor along the Mississippi River. Any efforts to abandon this corridor will cause unnecessary delays and unacceptable costs which I cannot support," Congresswoman McCollum added. In a November 18, 2008 letter (attached) to Rochester, MN community leaders McCollum stated this position.

The Federal Railroad Administration and a 1998 feasibility study identify a 400-mile corridor linking Chicago to St. Paul, with the Minnesota portion of the study defined as a 150-mile corridor between La Crescent and the Union Depot multimodal transit hub in downtown St. Paul.

*Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the House Appropriations Committee.*

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